

COUNCIL MEETING
Wednesday 24 May 2023

Present:- Councillor Robert Taylor (in the Chair); Councillors Cowen, Alam, Allen, Andrews, Atkin, Aveyard, Bacon, Baker-Rogers, Ball, Barker, Barley, Beck, Bennett-Sylvester, Bird, Brookes, Browne, Burnett, A Carter, C Carter, Clark, T. Collingham, Z. Collingham, Cooksey, Cusworth, Elliott, Ellis, Fisher, Griffin, Haleem, Havard, Hoddinott, Hughes, Hunter, Jones, Keenan, Khan, Lelliott, McNeely, Mills, Miro, Monk, Pitchley, Read, Reynolds, Roche, Sansome, Sheppard, Tarmey, Thompson, Tinsley, Whomersley, Wilson, Wyatt and Yasseen.

The webcast of the Council Meeting can be viewed at:-
<https://rotherham.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

189. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor reported that a very important pillar of his local community and a truly wonderful person was involved in a horrific accident whilst out running. Karen Chamberlain was the founder and lead runner of Aston Chasers all ladies running club. The club have done some incredible work not only inspiring fitness but instilling confidence and a sense of unity and belonging within the club.

Karen was really poorly, and the council sent its best wishes and support to Karen, Chris, Esme and Noah at this difficult time.

He was delighted to share that he received news from the Lord-Lieutenant of South Yorkshire, that a resident had been recognised as a Coronation Champion by Their Majesties the King and Queen.

Peter Dye, who volunteers for Lost Chord UK attends interactive sessions in care homes and the community, where he helps people living with dementia to get the most out of every session through compassion, encouragement, humour and by simply being open to the needs of the clients.

He recently completed a course of chemotherapy, continuing to volunteer until his treatment started and as soon as he was able, he got back to volunteering. He truly lives every day as if it were his last and inspires the session leaders and fellow volunteers with his positivity and constant smiling. A round of applause was held in congratulations.

190. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Baum-Dixon, Councillor Castledine-Dack and Councillor Foster.

191. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETING

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 12 April 2023, be approved for signature by the Mayor.

Mover: Councillor Read

Seconder: Councillor Allen

192. PETITIONS

There were no Petitions to report.

193. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest to report.

194. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Question 1: From: Sallyanne Kenny

Do you think it is acceptable for places and venues to not be accessible for disabled and wheelchair users, such as people with MS (Multiple Sclerosis)?

Councillor Lelliott responded that public buildings were required under the Equality Act 2010 (which replaced the Disability Discrimination Act) to provide access for people with disabilities. Disabled people have the right to 'reasonable adjustments' that make jobs and services accessible to them. Building regulations also required all new buildings to be fully and easily accessible to everyone who needs to use them.

In her supplementary question Ms Kenny described how she went to a private establishment the previous day and could not access the building. Councillor Lelliott said she would be happy to meet with Ms Kenny to discuss what the Council could do to support work with private operators.

Question 2: From: Keith Ollivant

Planning and Adult Social Care Departments are allowing Rhodus Properties with Heathcotes Care Group to operate from 24 Spinneyfield. This was opened on covenant protected land without consultation with residents and disregard to Council procedures. We request both Directors consider the legality of this business and act to close it. Civil proceedings will commence if this business continues operating.

Councillor Lelliott responded and advised that the building does not need planning permission so does not look like there's anything from a planning point of view that can be done.

It was understood that the house was being used by no more than six adults living together as a single household which does not result in a

change of use that would require planning permission.

If there are aspects that you would like us to look into then please leave your contact details so we can pick this up with you.

In his supplementary question, Mr Ollivant stated that he believed there to be a change in appearance that required planning permission. Councillor Lelliott stated that if that was the case, the Council could look into this, but all authorities are under a national building and compliance framework. The rules changed recently for permitted developments and planning was not always required.

Question 3: From: Michael Norton

RBC is allowing business operations since October without planning permission on residential land that does not allow it. The owner dishonestly purchased the house, has not consulted residents and has intentionally mislead RBC. Social Services place vulnerable residents in there with minimal overnight care. Will both department heads review this business and take immediate action to suspend all operating licences?

Councillor Lelliott responded by stating that the house was being used by no more than six adults living together as a single household which did not result in a change of use that would require planning permission; there was therefore no planning breaches in place.

The Council had a statutory duty to meet an adult's needs for care and support where the relevant eligibility criteria was met. It was good practice for adult social care providers to engage, as appropriate, with local residents to build positive relationships. It was the responsibility of the developer and/ or provider to ensure all legal restrictions are met.

The service had been operational since October 2022. The provider was registered with the Care Quality Commission and is monitored as part of the Council's Quality Assurance Process.

In his supplementary question, Mr Norton advised that no objections had been made at the time of the application as nobody had advised them that six adults would be living there.

The Mayor advised that questions 4 – 6 would receive a written response.

195. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no matters requiring exclusion of the press or public.

196. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S STATEMENT

The Leader opened his statement by paying tribute to the outgoing Chief Executive of the Chamber of Commerce, Andrew Denniff. He became Chief Executive at Barnsley and Rotherham Chamber in 2010 having joined the organisation from Sheffield Chamber in 2008. During his time at the Chamber, he played an instrumental role in the merger of the Chamber with Barnsley and its subsequent success was in large part testament to the dedicated hard and leadership that he had delivered.

Throughout all of the meetings that the Leader had held with him over the years, he had always been struck by his commitment to the business community, ensuring the Chamber had its membership and the businesses of Rotherham and Barnsley as its focus. As a long-standing member of various partnership forums, he had been a great supporter of partnership working in Rotherham. In all of those forums his contributions had always been trenchant, honest and constructive and his commitment to the town of Rotherham, its businesses and its people had shone through.

Thanks were offered for his contributions to Rotherham along with best wishes for the future and a long healthy retirement.

He explained that the Council had been shortlisted in this year's national Social Value Awards, in the Public Sector Leadership category. The awards recognised organisations and individuals which went above and beyond in providing added value to their communities. The Council's submission recognised the progress made since the launch of the social value policy in December 2019 which included:

- regular reports to Cabinet and Scrutiny,
- all contracts with a greater value than £100,000 to include social value commitments,
- weighting social value commitments at 20% of the bidding process, for which Rotherham was the only local authority in the country to make that requirement, and
- raising the living standards of the other residents through the real living wage.

He was pleased to report that on National Offer Day on 17 April for school place, that 99% of children in the borough were offered one of their preferred school choices in primary school or moving from infants to juniors.

There was great news in Children's Services for our children's home Liberty House, which provided short breaks for children with complex health needs, which was rated as outstanding for the third time in succession. Congratulations were offered to all the staff involved in that achievement

Lastly, he added a reminder about the Blood Donation Service hosting a

“What’s your blood type?” event on 31st May at Riverside House Café.

197. MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING

Resolved: That the reports, recommendations and minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 24 April 2023 be received.

Mover: Councillor Read

Seconder: Councillor Allen

198. YORK AND LANCASTER REGIMENTAL MUSEUM COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICY

Consideration was given to the report which sets out the updated Collections Management Policy for the York and Lancaster Regimental Museum. It was explained that RMBC was the sole trustee of the York and Lancaster Regimental Museum, which consisted of 3,900 objects, which were managed by the Museums, Arts and Heritage Collections and Exhibitions team. Around 11,000 photographs and archive items were managed by the Archives team. It was a great testament to the Museums team that the York and Lancaster Regimental Museum chose Clifton Park Museum to host and display this extensive collection.

Councillor Bennett-Sylvester sought clarification that the Council was not benefiting or receiving items that had been culturally misappropriated from other areas of the world. Councillor Sheppard explained that as rigorous tests as possible would be conducted to secure knowledge of the provenance of where any new items came from before determining if they should be accepted. In terms of items already held, nothing could be changed other than reporting on the provenance to be as open and transparent where possible.

Resolved: That Council:

1. Approved the York and Lancaster Regimental Museum Collections Management Policy (2023).
2. Approved the delegation to the Assistant Director of Culture, Sport and Tourism in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion for any future changes or new versions of the York and Lancaster Regimental Museum Collections Policy.

Mover: Councillor Sheppard

Seconder: Councillor Cusworth

199. MEMBERSHIP OF POLITICAL GROUPS ON THE COUNCIL, POLITICAL BALANCE AND ENTITLEMENT TO SEATS

Consideration was given to the report that detailed the membership of political groups on the Council, political balance and the entitlement to seats on, and the proposed appointments to Committees, Boards and Panels.

It was noted that Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 placed a duty on local authorities to set out the principles to be followed when allocating seats to political groups and for these principles to be followed when determining such allocation following formal notification of the establishment of political groups in operation on the Council. It was noted further that there was a requirement on local authorities to annually review the entitlement of the political groups to seats on the committees of the Council.

The report stated that the allocation of seats must follow 2 principles:

- a) Balance must be achieved across the total number of available seats on Committees; and
- b) Balance must be achieved on each individual Committee or body where seats are available.

There were presently 4 political groups in operation on the Council – the Labour Group (majority), Conservative Group (opposition), Liberal Democrat (Lib Dem) Group and Independent Conservative Group – with 5 non-aligned councillors (members who are not in a political group).

There are 149 seats available on committees, boards and panels, which were allocated according to the political balance.

It was noted that there had been changes in the political groups since the report had been published and these would be reflected in a subsequent report to Council.

Councillor Bennett-Sylvester requested that his vote against the appointment of Scrutiny Chairs involving the Executive be recorded.

The Monitoring Officer sought clarification that Councillor Bennett-Sylvester was not proposing to vote against the recommendations as his understand was that would prevent any independent member from being appointed seats on any committee but that he was asking for the minutes to record the points made.

Councillor Elliott sought assurance that he would be appointed to the Improving Lives Select Commission.

Councillor Bennett-Sylvester requested that his vote against the appointment of Scrutiny Chairs involving the Executive be recorded.

Again, the Monitoring Officer sought clarification that Councillor Bennett-Sylvester was requesting that his view was noted in the minutes and was not proposing a vote against the recommendations.

Councillor A Carter explained that when the Liberal Democrat Group voted they were voting on the Liberal Democrat appointments to those

committees.

The vote being carried with one vote against as per Section 17 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 appointments to committee for political groups were approved by majority, however the nomination to political balance to permit the appointment of independent councillors to committees was not approved.

Resolved:

1. That the entitlement of the membership of the political groups be agreed and such entitlements be reflected in Council's appointments of members to committees.
2. That approval be given to the appointment of Members to committees, boards and panels, and the appointment of Chairs and Vice-Chairs, as detailed in the Mayor's Letter.
3. That approval be given to the appointment of Members to joint committees, as detailed in the Mayor's Letter.

Cabinet

Leader – Councillor Read

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Working –
Councillor Allen

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People – Councillor
Cusworth

Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health – Councillor
Roche

Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy – Councillor
Lelliott

Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment – Councillor Beck

Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion – Councillor Sheppard

Cabinet Member for Housing – Councillor Brookes

Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Community Safety and
Finance –

Councillor Alam

Audit Committee

Cllr Baker-Rogers (Chair)

Cllr Browne (Vice Chair)

Cllr Wyatt

Cllr Ball

Cllr Mills

Licensing Board

Cllr Ellis (Chair)
Cllr Hughes (Vice Chair)

Cllr Wyatt
Cllr Clark
Cllr Pitchley
Cllr Cooksey
Cllr Hoddinott
Cllr Monk
Cllr McNeely
Cllr Browne
Cllr Aveyard
Cllr Haleem
Cllr Barker
Cllr Castledine-Dack
Cllr T. Collingham
Cllr Mills
Cllr Reynolds
1 x Conservative Vacancy
1 x Liberal Democrats Vacancy
1 x Liberal Democrats Vacancy
1 x Vacancy

Licensing Committee

Cllr Ellis (Chair)
Cllr Hughes (Vice Chair)

Cllr Wyatt
Cllr Clark
Cllr Pitchley
Cllr Cooksey
Cllr Hoddinott
Cllr Monk
Cllr McNeely
Cllr Barker
Cllr T. Collingham
Cllr Mills
Cllr Reynolds
1 x Liberal Democrats Vacancy
1 x Vacancy

Planning Board

Cllr Atkin (Chair)
Cllr Bird (Vice Chair)

Cllr Taylor
Cllr Cowen
Cllr Andrews

Cllr Keenan
Cllr Sheppard
Cllr Khan
Cllr Havard
Cllr Ball
Cllr Bacon
Cllr Burnett
Cllr Fisher
Cllr Tarmey
1 x Vacancy

Staffing Committee

Cllr Read (Chair)
Cllr Allen (Vice Chair)

1 x appropriate Cabinet Member as determined by the matter to be considered

Cllr Ball
Cllr T Collingham

Standards and Ethics Committee

Cllr McNeely (Chair)
Cllr Griffin (Vice Chair)

Cllr Hughes
Cllr Sansome
Cllr Yasseen
Cllr Bacon
Cllr Z. Collingham
Cllr Tarmey

Parish Councillor Alan Buckley
Parish Councillor Monica Carroll
Parish Councillor Richard Swann

Independent Members:

Mrs. Adela Bingham
Mrs. Mags Evers
Ms. Kate Penney
Mr. Peter Edler

Independent Persons:

Mr. Phil Beavers
Mr. David Roper-Newman

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

Cllr Clark (Chair)

Cllr Bacon (Vice Chair)

Cllr Baker-Rogers

Cllr Pitchley

Cllr Cooksey

Cllr Yasseen

Cllr Wyatt

Cllr Browne

Cllr Tinsley

Cllr Baum-Dixon

Cllr Miro

1 x Vacancy

Health Select Commission

Cllr Yasseen (Chair)

Cllr Miro (Vice Chair)

Cllr Griffin

Cllr Havard

Cllr Bird

Cllr Cooksey

Cllr Sansome

Cllr Hoddinott

Cllr Andrews

Cllr Keenan

Cllr Foster

Cllr Baum-Dixon

Cllr Hunter

1 x Conservative Vacancy

1 x Conservative Vacancy

1 x Conservative Vacancy

1 x Vacancy

1 x Vacancy

Improving Lives Select Commission

Cllr Pitchley (Chair)

Cllr Cooksey (Vice Chair)

Cllr Baker-Rogers

Cllr Griffin

Cllr Hughes

Cllr Monk

Cllr McNeely

Cllr Khan

Cllr Haleem

Cllr Atkin

Cllr Bacon

Cllr Z. Collingham

1 x Conservative Vacancy
1 x Conservative Vacancy
1 x Vacancy
1 x Vacancy

Improving Places Select Commission

Cllr Wyatt (Chair)
Cllr Tinsley (Vice Chair)

Cllr Taylor
Cllr Havard
Cllr Cowen
Cllr Ellis
Cllr Atkin
Cllr McNeely
Cllr Aveyard
Cllr Khan
Cllr Andrews
Cllr T. Collingham
Cllr Castledine-Dack
Cllr Reynolds
1 x Conservative Vacancy
Cllr C Carter
1 x Vacancy
1 x Vacancy

Corporate Parenting Group

Cllr Cusworth (Chair)
Cllr Pitchley (Vice Chair)

Cllr Browne
Cllr Burnett
Cllr Z. Collingham

Introductory Tenancy Review Panel

Chair and Vice Chair to be drawn from members of the Improving Lives Scrutiny Commission or Improving Places Scrutiny Commission

Cllr McNeely
Cllr Cooksey
1 x Conservative Vacancy
1 x Vacancy

Joint Consultative Committee

Cllr Alam (Chair)
Cllr Allen (Vice Chair)

Cllr Clark
1 x Conservative Vacancy
1 x Conservative Vacancy

Health and Wellbeing Board

Cllr Roche (Chair)
Cllr Cusworth

JOINT AND COMBINED AUTHORITIES

Sheffield City Region Mayoral Combined Authority Board

Cllr Read

Sheffield City Region Mayoral Combined Authority Board Rotational Member

Cllr Lelliott

Sheffield City Region Mayoral Combined Authority Local Enterprise Partnership Board

Cllr Read
Cllr Allen – Substitute

Sheffield City Region Combined Authority Housing and Infrastructure Board

Cllr Brookes
Cllr Beck - Substitute

Sheffield City Region Transport and Environment Board

Cllr Read
Cllr Beck - Substitute

Sheffield City Region Education, Skills and Employability Board

Cllr Lelliott
Cllr Cusworth - Substitute

Sheffield City Region Business Growth and Recovery Board

Cllr Lelliott

Cllr Allam – Substitute

Sheffield City Region Audit, Standards and Risk Committee

Cllr Castledine-Dack
Vacant - Substitute

Sheffield City Region Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Cllr Clark
Cllr Wyatt - Substitute
Cllr Bacon
Cllr Hunter - Substitute

South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority

Cllr Sansome
Cllr Ball

South Yorkshire Pension Authority – RMBC Vice-Chair for 23/24 & 24/25

Cllr Havard (s41 responsibilities)
Cllr David Fisher

South Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel

Cllr Haleem
Cllr Baum-Dixon

Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation Joint Committee

Cllr Atkin

200. THRIVING NEIGHBOURHOODS - UPDATES FROM WARD COUNCILLORS - THURCROFT & WICKERSLEY SOUTH

Further to Minute No. 55 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 19th November 2018, consideration was given to the annual Ward updates for Thurcroft and Wickersley South as part of the Thriving Neighbourhood Strategy.

Update reports had been provided as part of the agenda. However, each Ward Member was invited to speak.

Councillors Z Collingham and T Collingham provided an update on Thurcroft and Wickersley South Ward making the following points:

- Their first priority was to strive for a stronger and cohesive community focusing on empowering the residents.
- Thurcroft Village boasted litter pickers, community gardeners, a

regional veterans association, a bowling club, multiple churches, and residents' associations.

- The energy and passion for doing good in Thurcroft was incredible.
- Wickersley South has a community that had already empowered itself, with a profession and organised Parish Council.
- The residents had a collective voice for community concerns and had worked to preserve and promote long standing community assets such as the community centre.
- A targeted approach to assisting smaller groups where the biggest difference could be made using limited resources to expand or champion existing projects in both villages.
- Their second priority was to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour including the causes and symptoms wherever possible.
- They were cultivating a close relationship with the neighbourhood policing team and holding events or providing equipment to residents.
- The final priority was to develop and improve the local environment.
- They were very lucky to have so many lovely groups, residents and volunteers to interact with.
- Their thanks were offered to the whole neighbourhood's team, the Member and Civic Support team.

Resolved:

1. That the report be noted.

Mover: Councillor Z Collingham Seconder: Councillor T Collingham.

201. THRIVING NEIGHBOURHOODS - UPDATES FROM WARD COUNCILLORS - BRAMLEY & RAVENFIELD

Further to Minute No. 55 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 19th November 2018, consideration was given to the annual Ward updates for Bramley & Ravenfield as part of the Thriving Neighbourhood Strategy.

Councillor Reynolds shared that it he was grateful of the opportunity to serve Bramley & Ravenfield, that it had been a privilege to get to know the people and the area he lived in.

He gave thanks to the exceptional Council staff who he had worked with, in particular Nicola Hacking, Nicola Harding and Mark Hill. He felt that they had been a conduit and a channel for making things happen.

Councillor Reynolds highlighted the facelift Ravenfield crossroads had received and that it was now a focal point for the village, alongside the army of talented helpers and volunteers that ensure that clean up days occurred within the ward.

Councillor Mills echoed Councillor Reynolds sentiments around the support he had received from the housing team and also mentioned Lynn Paul and Andrea and South Yorkshire Police.

He thanked the local community groups, organisations and charities and commented that one of the projects he was most proud of was the British Sign Language signs within the parks in their ward and ensures that the park is accessible for those with disabilities.

It was agreed that details of this scheme would be shared with all members so they could consider this for their own wards.

In summary their ward report focused on successfully integrating themselves into their neighbourhoods, adapting their way of working and listening to their constituents as environments, ways of working, learning and community living have noticeably changed.

Resolved:

1. That the report be noted.

Mover: Councillor Reynolds

Seconder: Councillor Mills.

202. NOTICE OF MOTION - COAL MINES

Notice of Motion – Coal Mines

It was moved by Councillor Miro and seconded by Councillor A. Carter that:

This Council notes:

That planning approval was granted in December 2022 for a coal mine in Whitehaven, Cumbria. This is the first new coal mine to be approved in the UK for over 30 years and it will produce approximately 2.8 million tonnes of coal per year.

The U.K. Climate Change Committee estimates that the mine and the coal it will produce will result in annual emissions of approximately nine million tonnes.

Whilst recognising the historic economic benefits of the coal mining industry on the borough in the past. That Greenhouse gas emissions from burning coal to produce electricity and in industrial processes (for example, in the production of steel) are internationally recognised as the single biggest contributor to climate change, dwarfing the impact of other industries.

This Council Believes:

That opening new coal mines in the U.K. is not the answer to the problems faced by the country.

New coal mines should not be opened in the borough.

That the U.K. should be investing in greener technology in electricity generation and the steel industry.

This Council therefore Resolves:

To affirm its belief that opening new coal mines is wrong.

That council group leaders are requested to write to the Secretary of State, the Prime Minister and members of parliament representing the Borough of Rotherham asking them to bring forward legislation for a permanent ban on the opening of new coal mines in the U.K.

In accordance with Rule of Procedure 19 (2) Councillor Mills requested that a recorded vote should be taken on the proposed motion.

In accordance with the Rule of Procedure 5 Members stood to show their support for a recorded vote to be taken on the motion.

In accordance with Rule of Procedure 19 (1) a recorded vote was taken on the motion as follows:

For: Councillors Alam, Allen, Andrews, Atkin, Aveyard, Baker-Rodgers, Beck, Bennett-Sylvester, Bird, Brookes, Browne, A. Carter, C. Carter, Clark, Cooksey, Cowen, Cusworth, Ellis, Griffin, Haleem, Havard, Hoddinott, Hughes, Keenan, Khan, Lelliott, McNeely, Miro, Monk, Pitchley, Read, Roche, Sansome, Sheppard, Tarmey, Taylor, Wyatt, and Yasseen.

Against: Councillors Bacon, Ball, Barley, Burnett, T. Collingham, Z. Collingham, Elliott, Fisher, Hunter, Jones, Mills, Reynolds, Thompson, Tinsley, Whomersley, and Wilson.

Abstentions: None.

203. NOTICE OF MOTION - TO SUPPORT THE EXPANSION OF FREE SCHOOL MEALS TO ALL PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN**Notice of Motion – Support the Expansion of Free School Meals to all Primary School Children**

It was moved by Councillor Elliott and seconded by Councillor Jones that:

According to the Joseph Rowntree trust, 35% of children in our Borough

are living in poverty, this is a similar number of all nearby local authorities.

The ethos of RMBC is “every child to fulfil their potential” to help us achieve that we must make sure that every child has the nutrition they need to be able to learn and work towards their potential during the school day. Not doing so will undermine the efforts of the education and health care workforce to tackle inequalities.

There is no disputing the benefits of free school meals provide to those currently entitled, for many it is the only hot nutritious meal they have in a school day. A quality school meal helps improve children’s concentration and behaviour during lessons and can have an effect on improving school attendance, academic performance and not least on children’s health.

One in three school age children in England living in poverty missed out on free school meals despite families struggling with the cost-of-living crisis, this is because of the restrictive eligibility criteria and the lack of universal provision, 7 in 10 children from families on universal credit are not eligible for free school meals.

Excluding so many vulnerable children to free school meals is a real barrier to learning and must be urgently addressed. Now is the right moment for the Government to commit to an expansion of free school meals, providing a nutritional safety net that supports all children to learn and achieve. The clear solution to ensuring fairness and equality across our schools is to extend universal provision as Wales, Scotland and London have committed to deliver.

This Council recognises that:

When children are hungry, they cannot learn properly because it is harder for them to concentrate and so reach their potential.

Free school meals for every child will put money back into parents’ pockets which can be used to pay for other essentials such as heating and food at home or after school clubs or hobbies.

This Council resolves to:

Write to the Secretary of State for Education Gillian Keegan, copying in in our three local MPs, urging her to introduce universal free school meals for all Primary school children at the earliest opportunity.

In accordance with Rule of Procedure 19 (2) Councillor Allen requested that a recorded vote should be taken on the proposed motion.

In accordance with the Rule of Procedure 5 Members stood to show their support for a recorded vote to be taken on the motion.

In accordance with Rule of Procedure 19 (1) a recorded vote was taken on the motion as follows:

For: Councillors Alam, Allen, Andrews, Atkin, Aveyard, Baker-Rodgers, Barker, Barley, Beck, Bennett-Sylvester, Bird, Brookes, Browne, A. Carter, C. Carter, Clark, Cooksey, Cowen, Cusworth, Elliott, Ellis, Griffin, Haleem, Havard, Hoddinott, Hughes, Jones, Keenan, Khan, Lelliott, McNeely, Miro, Monk, Read, Roche, Sansome, Sheppard, Taylor, Thompson, Wilson, and Wyatt.

Against: Councillors Bacon, Ball, Burnett, Z. Collingham, Fisher, Hunter, Mills, Reynolds, Tinsley, and Whomersley.

Abstentions: None.

204. HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

Resolved:- That the reports, recommendations and minutes of the meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Roche

Secunder:- Councillor Cusworth

205. LICENSING BOARD SUB-COMMITTEE

Resolved:- That the reports, recommendations and minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Board Sub-Committee be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Ellis

Secunder:- Councillor Hughes

206. PLANNING BOARD

Resolved:- That the reports, recommendations and minutes of the meeting of the Planning Board Sub-Committee be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Atkin

Secunder:- Councillor Bird

207. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO DESIGNATED SPOKESPERSONS

There were no questions to designated spokespersons.

208. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS AND CHAIRPERSONS

(1) Councillor Whomersley asked why RMBC were not letting Dinnington Town Council see their detailed plans and submitted documents for the successful funding bid for Dinnington main street.

Councillor Lelliott explained that detailed plans and submitted documents included commercially confidential information, for example, on the budget available for land purchase, disclosure of which could prejudice future negotiations. The final documentation would include the bid document with some redactions and describe the elements of the scheme

that the government has agreed to fund, would be published and available to Dinnington Town Council and any other interested party once a final version of the funding agreement was received and signed. It was expected that the funding agreement would be signed by the middle of June and therefore the documentation could be generally issued at that time.

Councillor Lelliott invited Councillor Whomersley to meet 1:1 to view the documentation in his capacity as a Councillor. She stressed that he would be bound by the same confidentiality requirements and would not be lawfully able to share those details with the Town Council.

(2) Councillor Tinsley asked whether RMBC were taking part in 'No Cut May' this year.

Councillor Beck explained that May is an exceptional growing period for the areas that the Council maintain, and by not cutting in May, would have a knock-on effect for the following visit and would take vastly longer to complete, meaning we would fall behind in maintaining standards across the Borough. By not mowing in May, this would also leave increased waste cuttings on the following cut, which could present safety issues.

He went on to explain that the Council was working across services to look at how we better support nature and biodiversity, in line with the commitments made around climate change and biodiversity. Short term actions like not cutting for a single month was unlikely to promote biodiversity in a sustainable way

In his supplementary question Councillor Tinsley expressed his surprise that the Council were not taking part in the scheme and that certain areas in his ward, the grass was quite long. Councillor Beck advised that this time of year, the weather would impact on the grass and it is more challenging to maintain due to the reduced funding from central government.

(3) Councillor Tinsley raised that there was a Charge of £525 for TTRO's for Road Closures for Community Event and that neighbouring Authority's waive this Charge and asked whether this could be reviewed.

Councillor Beck responded by explaining that the Council had a fee in place of £1106 for events that require road closures, and some community events already benefited from the reduced fee.

The Council has waived the road closure fees for managing recent events such as the street parties for the late Queen's Platinum Celebration and the Kings Coronation and the management of the temporary traffic regulation orders for the Remembrance Parades which take place each November across the borough.

He advised that there were no current plans to consider any further

reduction in fees.

(4) Councillor Jones stated that Kimberworth St Thomas' cemetery had now been classed as closed and had been transferred into the Council's grounds maintenance team's portfolio and asked why it had not been added to the Dignity contract.

Councillor Sheppard responded by explaining that The Local Government Act (s215) made it incumbent on the Council to maintain closed churchyards.

The Church retained ownership of the land but the Council was legally required to maintain it. Dignity managed the Councils operational Cemeteries and Crematorium and not closed churchyards which is why it did not fall under the Dignity contract.

In his supplementary question, Councillor Jones stated that there were other closed cemeteries under the Dignity contract and at present residents were expected to lower standards as a result of it being transferred to the Council. Councillor Sheppard explained that this did not fall under his portfolio but he would ensure that clarification was received and Councillor Jones would be updated.

(5) Councillor Bennett-Sylvester asked about progress of plans to mark the occasion of the 600th birth anniversary of Thomas Rotherham.

Councillor Sheppard responded by updating that Rotherham Council's Museum, Arts & Heritage service had researched Rotherham Archives and Museum Collections for items related to the Archbishop Thomas Rotherham and that unfortunately there were very few items in the collections related to the Archbishop Thomas Rotherham.

As such the service had been limited in its ability to develop a full exhibition, however it agreed that the Archbishop Thomas Rotherham was an important figure in the Borough's history and a small exhibition would be created at Clifton Park Museum with items from the achievements of this important historical figure.

In his supplementary question Councillor Bennett-Sylvester asked for reassurance that that Council would give emphasis to this. Councillor Sheppard confirmed that the exhibition would start in July to coincide with the start of the school holidays, hopefully meaning that more children and families would be engaged in the story.

(6) Councillor Tinsley explained that there was once a dog litter bin on a parcel of land between Delta Way and Thicket Drive in Maltby. This had disappeared within the last few years and the Council disputed there ever was one. He asked whether the Council would look into putting a bin back in place.

Councillor Beck confirmed that the service had been out on site and assessed that a bin would be beneficial at the location and that a bin was installed on Monday 22 May and that it had been added to the relevant cleansing team's schedule.

(7) Councillor Bennett-Sylvester asked that, given the considerable Irish population in Rotherham had any discussions been held with the Wentworth Woodhouse Preservation Trust to chronicle its former owner's role in the colonial rule of Ireland.

Councillor Sheppard explained that although the Culture, Sport & Tourism service had a strong working relationship with the Wentworth Woodhouse Preservation Trust, as an independent organisation, the Trust set its own strategic priorities with regards to the interpretation of the history of the house and its owners, and also its work to engage local communities.

The service was not currently aware of any plans that the Trust had to chronicle its former owner's role in the colonial rule of Ireland.

In his supplementary question, Councillor Bennett-Sylvester asked for assurance that this story would be told. Councillor Sheppard offered to connect Councillor Bennett-Sylvester with the Chief Executive of the Wentworth Woodhouse Trust.

(8) Councillor Tinsley stated that he had recently attended rural and off road crime meeting along with four other Councillors and asked what partnership working the Council was doing along with the police to tackle both off road vehicles and rural crimes.

Councillor Alam explained that the Council worked closely with South Yorkshire Police and as part of wider partnerships to address Community Safety concerns, including off-roading and other rural crimes.

He went on to explain that the Council had taken a range of actions to prevent use of off-road vehicles in rural areas which included target hardening sites, introducing access controls, patrolling hot spot areas and installation of signage. The Council also worked with landowners or farmers for example to assist them in identifying ways to target harden their own land. He advised that the police had the responsibility to address the criminal behaviour itself however the Council aimed to try and prevent the activities to support local communities.

(9) Councillor Bennett-Sylvester asked for initial observations on the impact of voter suppression legislation in recent local elections.

The Leader responded by explaining that officers of Rotherham supported other local Councils on polling day including Barnsley, Kirklees and Sheffield.

The Electoral Commission were evaluating the full impact of the voter ID

requirements by collecting and analysing data collected at polling stations, hearing from electoral administrators and candidates about their experiences of polling day, as well as conducting a national public opinion research about voters' experiences.

There was some analysis by the BBC based on information from 160 of 230 councils where elections were held this year. It showed that 26,165 voters were initially denied ballot papers at polling stations. Of these, 16,588 people came back with valid ID, whilst 9,577 did not return.

It is expected the electoral commission would publish their initial analysis of the implementation of voter ID in June, followed by their full report in September.

To help successfully implement the new voter ID requirements for Rotherham's May 2024 elections, Rotherham would be looking to learn from those councils that had elections this year, as well as having regard for the Electoral Commission's report.

In his supplementary question Councillor Bennett-Sylvester stated that he was concerned about the potential number of people who did not turn out to vote and not just those who were turned away. The Leader confirmed a plan would come forward to support that work.

(10) Councillor Bennett-Sylvester asked how many days had passed since repaving work had commenced on Frederick Street.

Councillor Lelliott responded by stating that works commenced on the 17th January 2022 and were completed at the end of April 2023 – total time on site was 67 weeks (316 working days). Work was continuing on Howard Street and the paving needed to link to Frederick Street which is why the area where Frederick Street joined Howard Street still required further work.

In his supplementary questions, Councillor Bennett-Sylvester highlighted the length of time taken and Councillor Lelliott responded by advising that there had been a number of outside influences that had impacted on the delay such as different legislation around town centre bollards. She confirmed that she would look at how delays to works are better communicated with residents.

(11) Councillor Jones raised that at the last Council meeting the Leader agreed to release all the outstanding documentation that the Council holds around the access issue at Grange Park and requested an updated.

The Leader responded that he had hoped to have released the information already however both Solicitors for the Action Group and MHH had objected to the release of the information on the grounds that they are legally privileged and it was not in the public interest to release the information.

The Council was considering those objections. He stated that Action Group could help hurry this process along if it would waive its objections to the release of information that they had provided.

The Council was the only party that was trying to make sure that as much information as possible was available to the Public.

In his supplementary question, Councillor Jones said that the withdrawal to the objection was on its way and the Leader confirmed that the Council would continue to adhere to the legal process.

(12) Councillor Jones stated that two years ago he was told that he had been given all the documentation he could be given by Legal Services around the Droppingwell access, yet more pages have now been released, why was he told they were legally privileged.

The Leader responded that the Council was of the view that the information was legally privileged and the public interest was not in favour of releasing the information as it could have prejudiced the Council's legal position.

The application of the legal privilege exemption under the Freedom of Information Act required that it is balanced against the public interest. The advice from legal services following correspondence with the Action Group's solicitors and further detailed consideration was that there was not the reasonable prospect of litigation on this issue and therefore the balance was considered to have moved in favour of release.

In his supplementary question, Councillor Jones stated that the information that has now been released should not have been legally privileged. The Leader advised Councillor Jones that should he have any issues with professional conduct he should raise that through the correct process and not at this meeting.

(13) Councillor Bennett-Sylvester asked whether this year the totals claimed by members under the members allowance scheme be published on the RMBC website ideally next to each member's profile as well as being in the public notice section of the Rotherham Advertiser.

Councillor Allen confirmed that the Members' Allowances and Expenses for the Financial Year ended 31 March 2023 had been added to the Modgov Library and were available on the Council's Website.

Individual Member Allowance and Expenses information would be added to Modgov and displayed on the Member's home page and updated annually.

(14) Councillor Jones stated that the Council had served a second PCN on Grange Landfill Ltd, around the more than 5 acres out of cultivation in

any period and asked why a “stop order” could not be at the same time if we believed planning permission has been broken.

Councillor Lelliott explained that the planning department had served an enforcement notice on Grange Landfill Ltd regarding the potential breach of the 5 acre limitation condition which required the operator to restore the land that is over 5 acres back so that it is not out of cultivation. An appeal had been received against the serving of the enforcement notice which would be determined by the Planning Inspectorate.

A breach of condition of the planning permission does not render the permission void and subject to the breach being remedied, tipping operations could be undertaken. As a stop notice should only be served where it is essential to safeguard amenity or public safety in the neighbourhood; or to prevent serious or irreversible harm to the environment in the surrounding area. It was not deemed expedient to do so here as the breach in itself did not result in any of these matters over and above the consequences of the planning permission if it was to be carried out lawfully.

In his supplementary question, Councillor Jones stated that the operator was frantically trying to cover up their violations. Councillor Lelliott said she was happy to meet with Councillor Jones and the planning team to explain what action could be taken within planning law and conditions.

(15) Councillor Bennett-Sylvester raised that he often visited council homes in his ward with no carpets. He asked whether the Council had looked at leaving serviceable carpets of former tenants in place for new tenants as called for by the campaign group End Furniture Poverty?

Councillor Brookes responded that the Council recognised that the costs of furnishing a new home could quickly add up, and that many of our residents were already struggling with increased cost of living. When former tenants left carpets in a good condition, they are left in place for the new tenants. However, unfortunately, in the majority of cases carpets had to be removed due to their age or condition. In those cases, our Furnished Homes service offered affordable furniture and carpet packages to new tenants.

In his supplementary question Councillor Bennett-Sylvester asked how often the tenant was given a choice on whether they would like to retain the carpets. Councillor Brookes confirmed she would have to check that level of detail and confirm it to Councillor Bennett-Sylvester.

(16) Councillor Jones stated that Dan Jarvis the ex-SCR Mayor set up a veteran’s homeless fund and at the last covenant group meeting they were told the funding would be in place until the end of the year it’s now been returned. He asked why and who at RMBC had authorised its return.

Councillor Brookes stated that it was a South Yorkshire Mayoral

Combined Authority (SYMCA) fund, administered by local authorities. Rotherham received £16,250. The scheme provided financial support to assist veterans with securing accommodation in the form of rent in advance and bonds, deposits, furnishing and carpeting new homes and other household items. The fund could be personalised to help financially in other ways. Any person who was classed as a veteran and who required financial assistance was eligible.

The rules for the funding were determined by SYMCA. SYMCA agreed to roll over the fund from April 2022 to March 2023 but not from April 2023 to March 2024. This was outside of the Council's control. If a veteran was homeless or at risk of homelessness, the Council could assist using the homelessness prevention fund.

In his supplementary question, Councillor Jones stated that veterans should not have to turn to charities for support and Councillor Brookes advised that she could not answer for the SYMCA but the Council does provide a number of areas in which they support veterans and serving forces.

209. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items to consider.